// INSIDE ISSUE #03: EXCLUSIVE ANTONIO CAIROLI COLUMN //

# MOTOCROSS
ALIVE

## THE KING OF SUPERCROSS
## JEREMY MCGRATH INTERVIEW

## THE KING OF MOTOCROSS
## STEFAN EVERTS INTERVIEW

JAMES STEWART >
TEAM SAN MANUEL YAMAHA

## JOSH COPPINS
BACK HOME

## MONSTER ENERGY AMA SUPERCROSS
ENCLOSED MAYHEM

## MONGOLIAN MOTOCROSS
VISITING THE UNKNOWN

ISSUE#3 – FEBRUARY 2011
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COVER:

James Stewart makes the cover of the third issue and what a great shot it is. Carlos Aguirre is the photographer and he also took the images for the AMA Supercross feature and some of the gallery images from USA

Photo: Carlos Agguire

CONTENTS:

The kids at play. Teenagers Ken Roczen of Germany and Eli Tomac of America go to war at the fifth round of the AMA Supercross Championship

Photo: Frank Hoppen

CARLOS AGUIRRE

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PUBLISHER AND FOUNDER: Geoff Meyer « meyer716@planet.nl
DESIGNER: Ian Roxburgh « Ian@design147.co.uk
PHOTOGRAPHERS: Ray Archer, Simon Cudby, Frank Hoppen, Garth Milan, Geoff Meyer, Ian Roxburgh, Massimo Zanzani, Catlos Agguire
CONTRIBUTORS: Dave Bulmer, Antonio Cairoli, Steve Dixon, Alex Gobert, Andy McGechan, Tinus Nel
AUSTRALIAN EDITOR: Alex Gobert
NEW ZEALAND EDITOR: Andy McGechan
SOUTH AFRICAN EDITOR: Tinus Nel
BRITISH EDITOR: Dave Bulmer
EUROPEAN EDITOR: Geoff Meyer
AMERICAN EDITOR: Eric Johnson
ADVERTISING: Geoff Meyer « meyer716@planet.nl
ADDRESS: Nijmeegstraat 59, Gendt, 6691CM, Netherlands
PHONE: 31 481 420260
EMAIL: meyer716@planet.nl or mxlarge@live.nl
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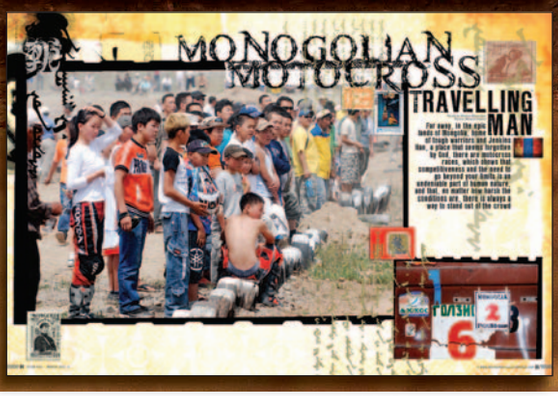


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# 2011

# GALLERY

ILLUSTRATED

## No.03.1

### JOSH HANSEN

**Monster Energy Pro-Circuit rider Josh Hansen sure has turned things around. As a young rider he was not putting the effort in and was quickly dumped. Spending some time on the sidelines make the kid understand and some help from Mitch Payton at Pro-Circuit has seen him back on track. Monster Energy image**

PHOTO COURTESY OF
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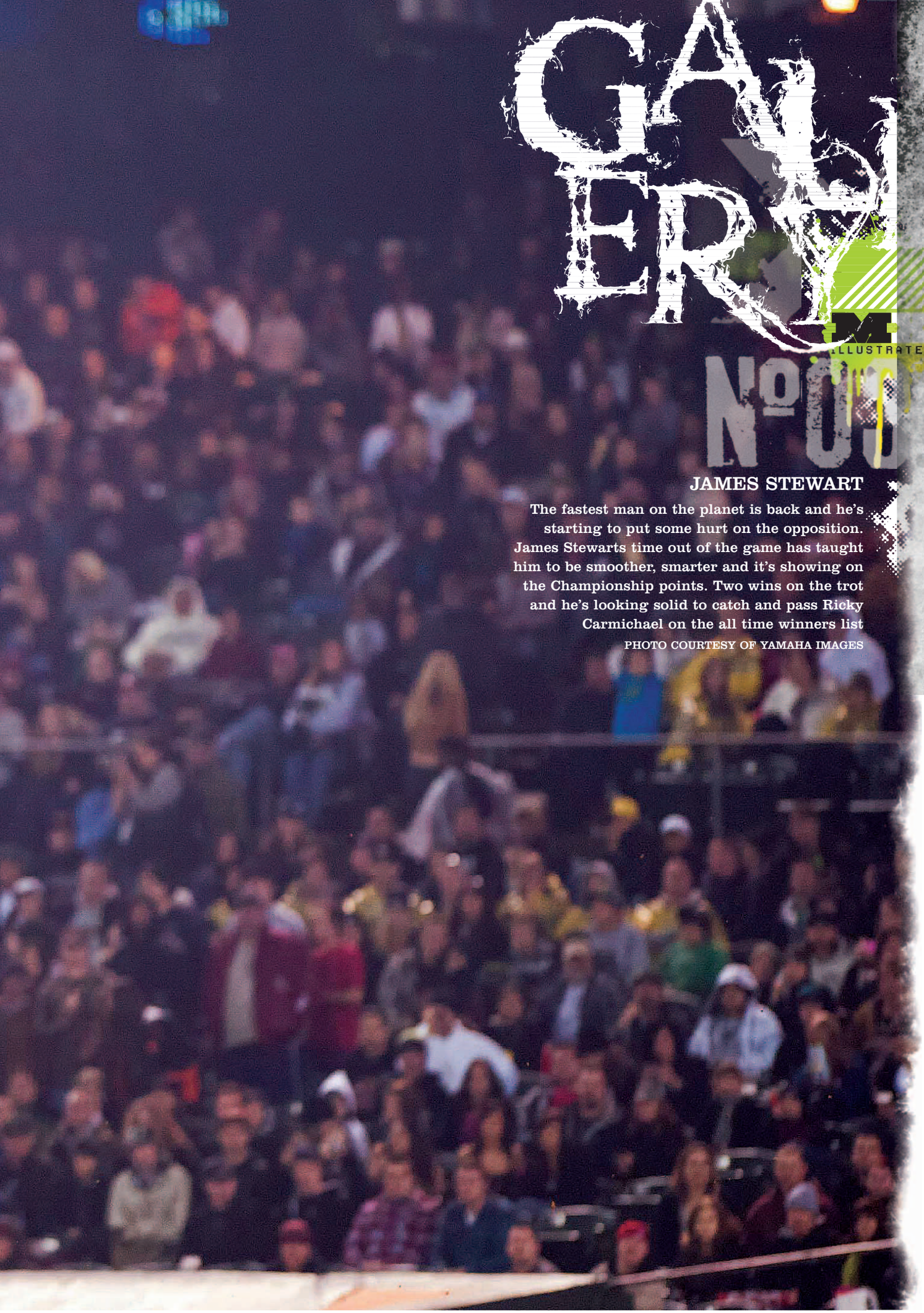

# GALLERY

MOTOCROSS ILLUSTRATED

## Nº 05.12

### JAMES STEWART

The fastest man on the planet is back and he's starting to put some hurt on the opposition. James Stewarts time out of the game has taught him to be smoother, smarter and it's showing on the Championship points. Two wins on the trot and he's looking solid to catch and pass Ricky Carmichael on the all time winners list

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When Dutchman Pierre Karsmakers won the first ever AMA Supercross Championship way back in 1974 nobody could have imagined where this new form of 'Indoor Motocross' would end. As it turns out the AMA Supercross Championship with record crowds and huge publicity around the World is now the biggest series MX/SX in the World. With crowds of around 60,000 attending some of the indoor events the sport has changed forever

# AMA SUPERCROSS ENCLOSED MAYH

As for the Karsmakers, he might have won that first Championship - amazingly he only won one single main event in Supercross in his whole career - he did however win 16 AMA 500cc Motocross overalls and had won a total of 30 AMA overalls - including SX and MX. Supercross might not be as fan friendly as Motocross, which is more our grass roots, but it does bring an intensity and atmosphere far beyond what Motocross has ever delivered. Motocross of Nations might be the one single exception, but that is a single weekend event that happens once a year, while Supercross pumps out for 17 nights of wild action in the year.

It's not hard to look at this year's AMA Supercross series and get a little excited. While James Stewart is clearly starting to make his presence felt and might just have begun another of his dominant seasons, the start of the AMA Supercross series hasn't been as exciting as this one in many years. To say the field is strong is an understatement. Of the current crop of AMA Supercross riders three sit inside the top five for all time Supercross wins in both the Lites and Supercross class, with only Supercross King Jeremy McGrath and the GOAT Ricky Carmichael sits above James Stewart, Chad Reed and Kevin Windham.

James Stewart is just eight wins away from passing Ricky Carmichael on the all times list, Carmichael with 48 wins and Stewa just one win away from did last weekend, then e the All Time leader McG seen better days, but bo of winning more AMA Su winners list with 28 Sup has the potential to be a season, Supercross 201 this year could be some defending AMA Supercro did outdoor MX in 2010? Nations in Italy in 2009. stronger, and smarter.

# NEM

Words by Geoff Meyer
Photos by Carlos Aguirre

rt with 40 and in combined results from the Supercross and Lites class Stewart is moving into second place behind McGrath. If Stewart continues to ride the way he xpect him to pass RC for Supercross wins this year and then start looking towards rath, who has 72 Supercross victories. Chad Reed and Kevin Windham might have th are capable of putting up great performances and only a fool would rule Reed out upercross main events. American legend Ricky Johnson is sixth in the All Time ercross wins (he never raced 125cc Supercross) and feels that this year's series n all time winner for the sport. "Depending on how healthy riders stay during the 1 could be an incredibly awesome year. Of course, we all say that every year, but thing special - if most stay healthy. "As I go down a list of riders, my top pick is ss Champion Ryan Dungey. Do I think Ryan will dominate Supercross the way he No, but after watching Ryan over the past few years, and especially at the MX of I've seen his confidence go up and up. Each time out, he gets a little faster, a little

# AMA SUPERCROSS ENCLOSED MAYHEM

"Two riders that have really impressed me so far are Ryan Villopoto and Trey Canard. Looking at their fitness, their riding technique, their ability to get thru traffic on the race track, both are far beyond what I thought they would be. "I knew Ryan would be fast. But when a rider has been away from racing for a while, as he has, sometimes it takes a while to knock off the rust. Ryan has looked great after his heat races - obviously the training with Aldon Baker has helped him a lot. I can see his fitness, how much he is sweating, and his ability to retain his breath and breathing after both his heats and main events. It's visible that Ryan has leaned down together with Aldon, and he's in awesome condition. "I thought it would take Trey Canard at least half a season in the premiere Supercross class to where he was really comfortable. As I watch Trey in these first three races, there is certain section of the different tracks where he is faster than either Villopoto or James Stewart. Once Trey puts together the whole track and an entire 20 laps like that - look for him to win some races this year." Former AMA Supercross competitor and now promoter of the AMA Motocross Championship, Davey Coombs is impressed with the Supercross series. The running of the events and the performances of the riders is something that makes for a really successful series. "On a pure racing level, the 2011 Monster Energy AMA Supercross tour has been exceptional. We have all of the top guys back and healthy, plus the defending champ putting up a good defense so far. After a month, however, Ryan Dungey needs to find some more speed or James Stewart and Ryan Villopoto will collectively gap him. It's also going to be interesting to see if Honda's three different entries -- factory rider Trey Canard, GEICO's Kevin Windham, and neo-privateer Chad Reed - can start making things happen.

"The Lites class has been no surprise to me. Mitch Payton has long had a winning formula that allows him to always have a frontrunner or two, and in this case his guys are doing exactly what we thought they would do. And while we all had high expectations for the rookies Ken Roczen and Eli Tomac, AMA Supercross is a tough business. It's a specialty sport that you won't find on U.S. outdoor or amateur circuits, nor can you find them in Europe. But we've seen steady improvement from both, with Tomac now getting comfortable on the podium. Roczen's turn came last weekend and he will get more chances to be there. "As far as the series itself, Feld Motorsports has built a slick entertainment package that delivers a lot of bang for the buck. You won't find a better deal in professional sports in America than taking a family of four to the Supercross races on a Saturday night. They over-deliver on the presentation and the pageantry of it all, and when the racing is good, that's almost a bonus. The U.S. economy is turning around, and the success of the 2011 series is a good indicator of great things to come."

Australian journalist and former AMA Road Racing hero Alex Gobert visited a round of the AMA Supercross and could feel the excitement the series brings to the sport. Having raced in the intensity of AMA Championships himself Gobert understands that this years series is special due to the competative level of the riders. "There's no doubt that this year has the ultimate recipe for great racing in the 450 class. Defending champion Dungey showed what he's got last year by winning as a rookie, however with a fully fit Stewart, Reed and Villopoto he certainly has his hands full. Personally I think it's obvious that Stewart still is the 'fastest man on the planet' and he displayed that at A2 by doing jumps that nobody else even tried! RV has been impressive upon return to injury, while Reed is building momentum as he does - don't underestimate the task he has taken on in 2011. Dungey was the first guy to take a blow this year when his chain derailed in Anaheim, so now's his time to stand up and fight like never before if he wants to defend his crown. It's a long season and Stewart and RV are already threatening a breakaway, but don't count out the other guys yet - or the likes of Canard, Tedesco or Brayton - because I have a feeling the party's just getting started!"

## AND WHAT ABOUT THE RACING IN 2011

Because of the domination of riders like Jeremy McGrath and Ricky Carmichael it was all the way back in the 1980's that three former or present Supercross Champions all lined up on the start gate as equal favorites. What that means for the sport is huge, and it adds to the excitement level. While James Stewart leads the way with AMA Supercross titles in 2007 and 2009, and Reed holds Championship from 2004 and 2008, the early favorite leading into this season might have been defending Champion Ryan Dungey who was being called "The Fastest Man on the Planet" soon after his 2010 success. As it is now Stewart might just stand at the head of the pack again as we move into round six of the series, but the action from those first five rounds has been truly breathtaking. After five rounds it's Stewart three wins and Villopoto two wins. Stewart looks to have the advantage and his speed is getting better and better after his time off, but nobody can count out Villopoto who

s also shown amazing speed for somebody who left the sport in 2010 with a serious injury. Many started ubting Stewart attitude towards the sport after he took nearly all of 2010 off with his wrist injury, but those ose to the multiple AMA Champion knew his heart was still in it. Hard work and a strong dedication to break e all time record of Jeremy McGrath has brought the African America right back to where he wants to be, and at is on top of the Main event podium and points standings.

One week, Ryan Villopoto wins and the Villopoto fans say that the "fastest man on the planet" has been throned, or that a new sheriff is in town. "No, no, no, you have it all wrong" Stewart fans say, "James was just ing smart." "Yeah sure" says the Villopoto fan, "Ryan caught up to James, pressured him and James crashed der pressure trying to run Villopoto's pace. James wasn't riding smart; he could not catch back up to Villopoto." llowing week James wins and the Stewart fans say that James is the fastest man on the planet and Villopoto n't run his pace. Villopoto fans say Villopoto is just riding smart. Meanwhile, Dungey gets a third one week and s career is over now that the Stewart/RV train is in town, and he will never win again. Reed gets a third and is aised as being right there by Stewart and Villopoto and to look for a win soon from Reed. I'm not sure the ewart/Villopoto fans are all that consistent with their pre and post race analysis but they sure are entertaining! ere are stand outs in the class of 2011 and for sure it's the three AMA Supercross Champions of past or esent, Dungey, Stewart and Reed who join Villopoto at the top of the heap. Add AMA Lite Motocross Champion nard, and veteran Windham and you have a pretty stacked field of riders. When you consider the top four in s year's series points either didn't race the Supercross class in 2010 or only rode part of the series it's pretty sy to see why the former fastest man on the planet (Dungey) sure went from hero to zero in no time. In the es class it is still Monster Energy Kawasaki rider Josh Hansen who leads the series points and seems in good ntrol of the situation. Two boys who are looking to improve their results and put some pressure on Hansen ough are Eli Tomac and Ken Roczen. Last weekend in Anaheim the two battled with Hansen for much of the ain event, before finishing second and third consecutively. Both these guys are Supercross rookies and it won't long before they stand on top of a Supercross podium. One race many people are looking forward to this year ll be the Las Vegas Shootout when Tomac, Roczen and Justin Barcia go head to head. It might just be the start what will be a legendary battle of the future.

## ANAHEIM II

### SUPERCROSS LITES MAIN EVENT

1. Josh Hansen (Kawasaki)
2. Eli Tomac (Honda)
3. Ken Roczen (KTM)
4. Broc Tickle (Kawasaki)
5. Kyle Cunningham (Yamaha)
6. Martin Davalos (Suzuki)
7. Ryan Morais (Suzuki)
8. Bruce Rutherford (Kawasaki)
9. Ryan Marmont (KTM)
10. James DeCotis (Honda)
11. Cole Seely (Honda)
12. Antonio Balbi (Kawasaki)
13. Jake Canada (Kawasaki)
14. Ben Evans (Kawasaki)
15. Scott Champion (Kawasaki)
16. Casey Hinson (KTM)
17. Kyle Beaton (Kawasaki)
18. Parker Eckman (Honda)
19. Yuta Ikegaya (Suzuki)
20. Nick Paluzzi (Yamaha)

### SUPERCROSS MAIN EVENT

1. James Stewart (Yamaha)
2. Ryan Villopoto (Kawasaki)
3. Chad Reed (Honda)
4. Justin Brayton (Yamaha)
5. Trey Canard (Honda)
6. Andrew Short (KTM)
7. Ivan Tedesco (Kawasaki)
8. Kevin Windham (Honda)
9. Brett Metcalfe (Suzuki)
10. Davi Millsaps (Yamaha)
11. Kyle Regal (Yamaha)
12. Mike Alessi (KTM)
13. Matt Boni (Kawasaki)
14. Kyle Chisholm (Yamaha)
15. Nick Wey (Yamaha)
16. Jason Thomas (Suzuki)
17. Chris Blose (Kawasaki)
18. Tye Simmonds (KTM)
19. Fabien Izoird (Kawasaki)
20. Ryan Dungey (Suzuki)

### SUPERCROSS LITES WEST POINT STANDINGS

1. Josh Hansen 113
2. Broc Tickle 105
3. Eli Tomac 91
4. Ryan Morais 84
5. Cole Seely 70
6. Ken Roczen 69
7. Martin Davalos 60
8. Kyle Cunningham 60
9. Tyla Rattray 58
10. James DeCotis 51

### SUPERCROSS STANDINGS

1. James Stewart 117
2. Ryan Villopoto 112
3. Chad Reed 90
4. Trey Canard 87
5. Ryan Dungey 79
6. Brett Metcalfe 67
7. Andrew Short 64
8. Kevin Windham 59
9. Justin Brayton 57
10. Ivan Tedesco 48

## MY SUPERCROSS EXPERIENCE

As a 15 year old boy on the outskirts of Sydney I used to marvel at the American racers. When I would pick up my issue of Motocross Action in the newsstands I couldn't wait to see the latest year and who had won what. Names like Bob Hannah, Jimmy Weinert, Marty Smith, Kent Howerton, Marty Tripes, and Tony DiStefino were the names my brothers and I followed as kids. Every afternoon after school (for some reason my parents didn't believe in homework) we would head off to our local track decked out in the riding gear of our hero's and marvel at the posters on our walls and we dreamt of one day attending one of these Supercross events.

Thanks to my father taking a mortgage on the house and taking the family to America for an extended holiday I got to attend my first ever AMA Supercross back in 1978, visiting the Daytona and Houston. For anyone who attends their first Supercross it was a truly amazing experience, just the electricity in the stadium was enough to make me want more. Unfortunately my hero Marty Smith holeshot then pack into the first corner in Houston, and then crashed. He was run over by just about the whole field and his winning was over. His career never reached the same heights again. I visited America just about every year after 1978, travelling from one end of the nation to the other, following Motocross, Speedway, Road Racing, Grand Nationals, Enduro and anything else that taught my attention. I even lived there in the 1980's, basing myself out of Indianapolis, the home of the Indy 500. Ten or so years after my first visit in the McGrath era of the 1990's I would again get the opportunity to visit this American sport of Supercross. This time working as a journalist I got to watch the King of Supercross dominate like nobody before him or after (in terms of Supercross wins). It was not a golden era for tight racing, but it was the era of a King.

Funnily enough another decade later it was Supercross that helped me make the decision to stop visiting America. After I attended the opening round of the 2005 Supercross series I had pretty much decided I had had enough of the whole US Supercross thing. It was raining on that day, it was cold and I was sitting in the middle of a huge jetlag experience. The whole approach from the people who ran the Supercross events, with so many rules and their unfriendly nature had taken the fun level out of covering these events, plus the rockstar attitude of the Supercross stars made going to Supercross more than difficult. In fact covering Supercross was the most painful thing I had to do in my social and working life. Plastic people just weren't my thing and the AMA Supercross was the place to be. Artificial obstacles were not the only thing artificial at these races. I've heard its change a lot in the last six years and I guess due to the financial situation in America many people have come back down to earth and all that fist pumping and back slapping seems to have disappeared a little. Hell, you can even talk to the riders now, well at least most of them. Now six years later I came closer than I have been for six years to get on a plane and attend a Supercross again. I was really excited to visit Anaheim I and with the expected appearance of Grand Prix riders Antonio Cairoli, Marvin Musquin, and Ken Roczen it was a must. As the event got closer Musquin got injured, Cairoli was asked not to ride by KTM and Roczen was the only GP rider left. I cancelled my air ticket and watched the race on the internet.

If the series remains as it is now and Stewart, Villopoto, Dungey and Reed continue to swap paint, then I might just rebook that ticket.

## TOP TWENTY ALL TIME WINNERS LIST

| | Combined | Supercross | Lites |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jeremy McGRATH | 85 | 72 | 13 |
| Ricky CARMICHAEL | 59 | 48 | 11 |
| James STEWART | 58 | 40 | 18 |
| Chad REED | 44 | 38 | 6 |
| Kevin WINDHAM | 29 | 18 | 11 |
| Ricky JOHNSON | 28 | 28 | |
| Bob HANNAH | 27 | 27 | |
| Damon BRADSHAW | 25 | 19 | 6 |
| Jeff WARD | 20 | 20 | |
| Ryan VILLOPOTO | 20 | 9 | 11 |
| Ezra LUSK | 19 | 12 | 7 |
| Mark BARNETT | 17 | 17 | |
| Jeff STANTON | 17 | 17 | |
| Jean-Michel BAYLE | 16 | 16 | |
| Ryan DUNGEY | 16 | 6 | 10 |
| Jeff EMIG | 13 | 7 | 6 |
| Damon HUFFMAN | 13 | 1 | 12 |
| Nathan RAMSEY | 13 | 1 | 12 |
| David BAILEY | 12 | 12 | |
| Jeff MATIASEVICH | 12 | 1 | 11 |

## AMA SUPERCROSS CHAMPIONS

2010 Ryan DUNGEY (USA), Suzuki RMZ450
2009 James STEWART (USA), Yamaha YZ450F
2008 Chad REED (AUS), Yamaha YZ450F
2007 James STEWART (USA), Kawasaki KX450F
2006 Ricky CARMICHAEL (USA), Suzuki RMZ450
2005 Ricky CARMICHAEL (USA), Suzuki RM250
2004 Chad REED (AUS), Yamaha YZ250
2003 Ricky CARMICHAEL (USA), Honda CR250
2002 Ricky CARMICHAEL (USA), Honda CR250
2001 Ricky CARMICHAEL (USA), Kawasaki KX250
2000 Jeremy McGRATH (USA), Yamaha YZ250
1999 Jeremy McGRATH (USA), Yamaha YZ250
1998 Jeremy McGRATH (USA), Yamaha YZ250
1997 Jeff EMIG (USA), Kawasaki KX250
1996 Jeremy McGRATH (USA), Honda CR250
1995 Jeremy McGRATH (USA), Honda CR250
1994 Jeremy McGRATH (USA), Honda CR250
1993 Jeremy McGRATH (USA), Honda CR250
1992 Jeff STANTON (USA), Honda CR250
1991 Jean-Michel BAYLE (FRA), Honda CR250
1990 Jeff STANTON (USA), Honda CR250
1989 Jeff STANTON (USA), Honda CR250
1988 Rick JOHNSON (USA), Honda CR250
1987 Jeff WARD (USA), Kawasaki KX250
1986 Rick JOHNSON (USA), Honda CR250
1985 Jeff WARD (USA), Kawasaki KX250
1984 Johnny O'MARA (USA), Honda CR250
1983 David BAILEY (USA), Honda CR250
1982 Donnie HANSEN (USA), Honda CR250
1981 Mark BARNETT (USA), Suzuki RM250
1980 Mike BELL (USA), Yamaha 250
1979 Bob HANNAH (USA), Yamaha 250
1978 Bob HANNAH (USA), Yamaha 250
1977 Bob HANNAH (USA), Yamaha 250
1976 Jim WEINERT (USA), Kawasaki 250
1975 Jim ELLIS (USA), Can-Am 250
1974 Pierre KARSMAKERS (HOL), Yamaha 250

AMA
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# GET READY

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## 2011 DATES

ROUND 1 – 2nd & 3rd April - FatCat MotoParc R
ROUND 3 – 11th & 12th June – Whitby ROU
ROUND 5 – 27th & 28th August – Hawkstone Park ROUND 6
ROUND 7 – 24th & 25th Se

FUCHS Silkolene

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# FOR 2011!

## & VENUES

ROUND 2 – 7th & 8th May – Landrake Moto Park
ND 4 – 30th & 31st July – Canada Heights
– 3rd & 4th September – Desertmartin, Northern Ireland
ptember – Wakes Colne

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# JEREMY MCGRATH, MY HERO | ANTONIO CAIROLI

by Antonio Cairoli

Words by Antonio Cairoli > Photo courtesy of Spy Goggles

IT STARTED WHEN I WAS JUST FIVE YEARS OLD. I WATCHED HIM RIDING ON VIDEOTAPES IN MY HOUSE IN SICILY, HIS RIDING STYLE WAS SO DIFFERENT THAN THE REST, I LOVED THE WAY HE WAS RIDING HIS BIKE. THOSE VIDEOTAPES ARE THE BEGINNING OF HIM BECOMING MY HERO! AFTER THE VIDEOTAPES THERE WAS THE FIRST TIME I SAW HIM RIDING SUPERCROSS ON TV

Then when I was 10 years old my older sister was having a baby and she asked me to pick the name, and as you can guess I called my little nephew after my 'hero' Jeremy! So my nephew Jeremy is named after Jeremy McGrath!

Than a few years later I saw him riding for the first time at the Fastcross in Italy. I traveled with my family from Sicily to the north of Italy to see this most important race of the year, and my hero Jeremy! Sadly I couldn't meet him that weekend.

This year the news came that Jeremy should ride the SX race in Genova, Italy. I was pumped about this was great news and I couldn't wait to maybe get the chance to finally meet him. On one moment during the weekend he came to my teams area, because he knew I loved to meet him. We talked and made some pictures, and after the race we swapped raceshirts! His signed shirt is hanging in my house in Rome!

As you all know from my last column I am in America now, training outdoor and also doing some Supercross practice here with some good weather and different tracks.

I have a new goggle deal for the next two years, I'm riding with SPY and Jeremy is one of the faces from SPY. So they wanted me to do a photoshoot with Jeremy and Kevin Windham, so they could get some new photo material for the SPY ad campaign.

We should do the shoot at Jeremy's ranch, and they made it a two day shoot because it's a long way to travel there. We all met up all for the drive there, and on our way we stopped to eat some Mexican taco's together. I remember sitting there at the table and thinking, here I am, eating taco's with him, my hero Jeremy McGrath.

We finally arrived with the SPY crew at the ranch, an amazing place far away from everything, a big green valley between two big mountains, with a few cool motocross and supercross tracks, and some great places for free-riding. Further into the valley we arrived at a few nice houses.

That night I played golf for the first time ever, we sat around the fire place, eating some barbecued hamburgers, playing soccer and racing the remote control cars, we played poker and pool, a great relaxing night with some really nice American people!!

The day after Kevin arrived and we had a great photo shoot with the three of us! And we had a fun day getting to know eachother better! And Jeremy has still the style from 10 years ago, what a great style both Jeremy and Kevin have on the bike!

For some people it is maybe weird that a person like me is still talking about another rider like this rider, but he has always been my hero and its not easy to see him different than that, it won't change in one day the feeling I have about him.

Here I am now going from being a young boy sitting on my knee's in front of the television watching Jeremy ride on my old video tape's, to staying at his ranch, riding with him and putting his phone number in my phone.
Unbelievable how things can change.
TC222

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# Tony Cairoli_222 - MX1 WORLD CHAMPION 2010

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# VIVA LAS VEGASX

## DAVID BULMER

*by David Bulmer*

**Words by David Bulmer > Photo by Frank Hoppen**

THE SUPERCROSS SEASON IS NOW IN FULL FORCE AND JUDGING BY THE EARLY ROUNDS, THIS COULD BE ONE EPIC YEAR AS ALL THE MAIN PLAYERS LOOK TO HAVE BOUGHT THEIR A-GAME TO THE TABLE. AND THAT'S JUST THE SX CLASS, IN THE LITES WE HAVE THE ADDED EXCITEMENT OF WATCHING KEN ROCZEN LEARNING HIS TRADE AS HE BATTLES AGAINST EXPERIENCED RIDERS LIKE JOSH HANSEN AND BROC TICKLE. SO FAR 2011 IS EVERYTHING IT WAS CRACKED UP TO BE

But let's face it, it's never going to be as good as outdoors... or is it? Now I admit, I'm never going to convince people to go to a supercross race over a motocross event, because I couldn't even convince myself to do the same. But what I will try and do is explain just why exactly you should go and see at least one American supercross event in your lifetime if you consider yourself a fan of the sport.

Before I start, I will say that I have only been to Las Vegas Supercross, I've been three times, but not every city is like Vegas (I wish) so take that under consideration when you read these.

Anyway, here are some reasons why you should book yourself a flight and head stateside for a bit of stadium action:

1. WEATHER

Let's face it, the weather in Europe sucks right now. It's cold, rain is following on from the snow and being outside is not fun. So how does sitting in an open stadium in shorts and t-shirts at 8pm sound? Pretty damn good I'd say, and that's exactly what you can expect at a lot of the rounds.

2. GOOD SEATS

Too hung-over to save your place at your favourite spot of the track at 7am? Well you don't have that problem in supercross, every seat is good and you can see pretty much all the action from everywhere. Plus, you have the added benefit of sitting down and watching the action, which is no bad thing.

3. FULL DAY

People who buy tickets and only turn up for the night show miss out on some of the best stuff. You've got practices to watch, pit areas to explore and people to meet. Sure it's no muddy field, but there are certain advantages to socialising on flat hard-standing areas with everything laid out in a walking-friendly manner. And with the AMA Nationals only being a one-day affair now, you can't use that argument against supercross anymore.

4. ATMOSPHERE

Anyone who's been to a football game knows that when you get 50,000 people in a stadium, all cheering at the same time, it create an awesome atmosphere. This is what supercross creates. Atlanta can even get 80,000 people at their race so just imagine what that's like. Not even the MXdN can compare to those figures.

5. THE SHOW

From the rider introductions to the split-second-perfect fly-over by the Air Forces at Vegas, supercross is a one-stop shop for entertainment. Of Of course you also have the promo girls, the fireworks and all manner of razzmatazz to keep it all ticking along. The Americans do know how to put on a show.

6. RACING

And lastly, let's not forget the actual racing. As I touched on earlier, we've got some of the best riders, all riding at their peak and barring injuries, this has the very real possibility of going down to the wire. And besides, being there is live is the only way you have of watching it outside of America so really, it makes sense.

Now don't get me wrong, if I had to follow a series for a year, it'd still be an outdoor one. However it really is something special to watch the top riders in the world negotiate one of the toughest and most dangerous disciplines on two wheels. In fact if this season keeps on producing action like we saw at Los Angeles, and the points stay close into the final event... Viva Las Vegas #4 !

# Will he mak

# Grand Prix Of The Netherlan
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# THE FIGHTER:

## UP AGAINST THE ROPES, JOSH HANSEN FIGHTS BACK

BY ERIC JOHNSON

At 5 P.M. and with the warm sunshine that bathed the Anaheim pit area all afternoon long gone, Monster Energy/Pro Circuit/Kawasaki racing Chief Mitch Payton, along with team members Jim "Bones" Bacon, mechanic Derek Brush – and many others - congregated in a phalanx outside the Asterisk Medical Unit 18-wheeler. They were waiting for word to come down on the fate of their 2011 West Region Championship leader - namely Josh Hansen.

"I think he broke some fingers and may have a concussion," said Bacon. "The doctors are looking at him and going to make a decision on whether he can race tonight."

Added Mitch Payton, who was all too aware that his rider's championship hopes lie in the balance, "We're just going to have to wait and see." He then went back to speaking quietly with Timmy Ferry and Trey Canard who had come by to check on Hansen.

25 minutes earlier, Hansen had gone down a ton in the whoop section, landing head-first on the face of one the nefarious mounds of dirt. Slow in getting to his feet, he was stunned and in a deep fog when delivered to the medical station.

"I rode up with him and he kept repeating the same questions," said Donnie Hansen, Josh's father and 1982 AMA Supercross Champion." I asked him, 'Do you remember the track?' He did. So know he's now inside the truck and they're going to give 15 more minutes to see if his head clears. I guess we'll see." Donnie retreated back to the Pro Circuit rig where he sat in a chair in silence.

Flash forward two hours.

Josh Hansen is slowly getting dressed in the Pro Circuit hauler. "Watch this crash, dude," he said, pointing to a TV monitor which showed his shunt in gory detail. "How gnarly is that? Man, the back of my hand is broken. Can you believe that shit?"

When time came to get on the bike for his heat race, Hansen pulled his jersey over his head and limped out of the truck looking like he was 85 years-old. Next to his #100 KXC250, friend and Doctor Rey Gubernick (A.K.A. "Dr. G"), with tape and scissors, helped Josh adjust his mangled hand to the handlebars. "Man, it's tweaked," said Hansen, grimacing.

"Stay positive. Think about the good stuff," said "G". "Stay positive."

Not long after, Hansen's mechanic kicked the bike to life and warmed it for a solid five minutes. "It's hot as fuck and ready to go," said Brush. "THINK POSITIVE!" he added.

Hansen then headed to the stadium tunnel – and the starting line.

"He's going to do it tonight, you watch," "G" told this writer. "Send me an invoice he joked."

And Hansen did do it. In the finest performance of his stormy career, Josh Hansen – aching head and smashed hand – grabbed the holeshot, and despite the spirited advances of youngsters Ken Roczen [Germany] and Eli Tomac [USA] – put in 15 electric-smooth laps. In doing so, he not only won his third race of the season, he also slammed home the fact that he truly has become a determined racer, one capable of rising above the pain, distractions and setbacks that come with being a champion. Can Hansen hang on, literally and figuratively, to win his first title? If Saturday night was any indication, he certainly stands a fighting chance.

Around midnight, back in the Monster/Pro Circuit/Kawasaki truck, a battered and bruised Hansen sat slumped over in a chair. In the words of Keith Richards, Josh "...wasn't looking too good, but was feeling okay."

"Okay, man," I said, "that's the best race I've ever watched you ride. You had the shit beat out of you today. What got you though it all?"

"Just how bad I would love to win a championship," he said.

Then his dad walked up and hugged him. Through all the ups-and-downs the two had been through – the former champion and the prodigal son – perhaps this was the sweetest moment of them all.

MAIN PHOTO: STEVE COX > INSET: SIMON CUDBY

## ANTONIO CAIROLI

**Four times World Motocross Champion Antonio Cairoli spent some time in America practicing with his Red Bull KTM team mates and enoying the sunshine. He's back in Europe now and preparing for the defence of his MX1 World Championship. Here he is riding in the USA**

PHOTO COURTESY OF AXO

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**Round 1** 6 March
Little Silver, Exeter
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**Round 2** 27 March
Canada Heights, Kent
MX1 / MX2 / MXY2

**Round 3** 17 April
Lyng, Norfolk
MX1 / MX2 / MXY2

**Round 4** 1 May
Milton Park, Northampton
MX1 / MX2 / MXY2

**Round 5** 26 June
Desertmartin, N. Ireland
MX1 / MX2 / MXY2

**Round 6** 24 July
Foxhill, Swindon
MX1 / MX2 / Vets

**Round 7** 14 August
Duns, Scotland
MX1 / MX2 / MXY2

**Round 8** 2 October
Hawkstone Park
MX1 / MX2 / Vets

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# LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

## STEFAN EVERTS INTERVIEW

Words by Geoff Meyer
Photos by Gary Freeman
and Ray Archer

Ten Times World Motocross Champion Stefan
loves a challenge. In his racing career it was a
finding a way to defeat his rivals, be it trainin
or riding for the best team possible. Now as
manager of the Red Bull KTM factory tean
is the same and the Belgian legend is usin
experience, but also the experience of a
his own battles on the track, but has ris
the greatest team manager of all time

Everts
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sen to become
, Roger De Coster.

Together they form what in many Motocross fans eyes is the dream team, possibly the two greatest Grand Prix riders of all time. De Coster the greatest team manager of all time and Everts leading KTM into a new era on the FIM World Motocross Championships.

With the Red Bull KTM team making their next goal to improve their results in America Everts has been busy flying from one end of the World to the other. It's in a time when Stefan has become a father for the second time and also a period that will see his team prepare to defend World titles in both the MX1 and MX2 Championships.

We caught up with Stefan as he prepared for a quick trip to Austria where he needed to go over some things with the people at the factory. It's not just the team where Everts is busy, but also future models. Life in the fast lane was always the pace Everts wanted to live, and it seems at the moment he's faster than ever.

**MXIllustrated:** Stefan thanks for your time. Just wondering how KTM feel about the results at the moment in America. Disappointed, or happy?

**EVERTS:** I think we are happy, the team is working at its best, like never before. Of course Roger is the big man in this whole situation, he made a good team, good mechanics, and good technical people behind it. At the moment the results are not there, but with Ken doing his first Supercross he is excited, and sooner or later he will bring better results we know that. With the 350 it's the first year in Supercross and with Andrew we knew we didn't have the winner, we planned to have him more to develop the bike more and we want to get him on the podium sooner or later. We are happy with the progress with the bike. It's a new direction for KTM in America; it's a matter of time to build up the results.

**MXIllustrated:** I saw on the forums that some people were saying the 350 isn't good on Supercross because Andrew (Short) isn't doing that well. In my opinion I can't see him doing any better no matter what he rides. The Supercross class in America looks so strong at the moment, something like in the 1980's with Ricky Johnson, Johnny O'Mara, David Bailey and some of the other legends of that era. What is your opinion?

**EVERTS:** I fully agree, when you look who is on the start gate now with Stewart, Villopoto, Dungey, Canard, Reed, the class is very strong this year. Andrew was a top five rider before and if people expect him to go for podiums against those guys you can't expect that. To blame it on the 350 isn't correct. We know we need to develop this bike more for Supercross. We have proven we can do it on Motocross, but Supercross is a different ball game, and that takes time for Roger and the team. For Roger and Ian to move from another team and the progress they have made in the last weeks is incredible. If we speak after a little more than a year it will be very different.

**MXIllustrated:** Watching Kenny (Roczen) riding he seems so fast, but he's making a lot of mistakes, why is that?

**EVERTS:** It's the excitement, it's too much for him and he is so motivated to do well, but he needs the feeling to be better, but at the moment he doesn't have the experience. He knows he has the speed to be on the podium and he wants to show it, but he is still not putting the whole package together. We are all convinced that he will do it. In the Grand Prix he was improving at every race, but Supercross is a lot different. Basically he is just too excited.

**MXIllustrated:** You raced AMA Supercross for a short period, back in the early part of your career. How was that for you? You were a pretty good Supercross rider, your technique was good.

**EVERTS:** For me it was the same, my riding was good and I was fast, I was a potential top five rider at the time, and I was racing Bradshaw, Stanton and Bayle, the level was very high. I was trying to go too fast at the wrong moment and that put me on the ground a lot and I ate a lot of American soil.

**MXIllustrated:** What was your best result in AMA Supercross?

**EVERTS:** I have to say it was my first one in Houston, it was my very first Supercross race and I was in third place for 12 laps, and I had some problems and dropped back to ninth, but you have to remember I was in the army (before flying to America) and didn't ride in that period and then I took off to America and went to ride the first Supercross in Houston. I had hardly practices before the race because I was in the army. After that race I only got better, but I was so excited and motivated to do each race better than the last one, and that excitement took me every time a little too far and I crashed.

**MXIllustrated:** Watching the first rounds of this year's series I can't help but feel like this sport is so dangerous. The intensity at the start of the race is just scary. You watched Anaheim I live and obviously keep an eye on how your riders are doing via internet or whatever. What is your opinion of the sport of Supercross?

**EVERTS:** It is different and it's dangerous to be out with so many guys in that little area and in such a tight space, it's so easy to jump next to the track or off the track and in a way it is very dangerous. For me that opening lap is the most dangerous because the first lap they are all together and they jump the triple and if just one guy doesn't jump, wow, I mean I was in there before when I raced and I couldn't do that anymore, it is very dangerous.

# LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

## STEFAN EVERTS INTERVIEW

**MXIllustrated:** Ok, we have Ben Townley coming back to race the FIM World Motocross Championship. Can he beat Antonio (Cairoli) for the Championship? How do you see the outcome of all this?
**EVERTS:** Personally I think it's not going to be easy for Ben to show up and do what he did a few years ago. Things have changed in Europe and there are many new riders on the start line, the circuits are new for Ben and to start on that confidence he had when he left Europe in 2005, it's a different ball game and I think it's going to be tough for him. I think sooner or later he will be disappointed.
**MXIllustrated:** How is Antonio preparing for this battle? What is he doing differently?
**EVERTS:** Antonio is more motivated now that Ben is coming back and he isn't the sort of guy who lets anyone beat him easily. It's not for nothing that Antonio is in the states riding at the moment, and he has been on the bike since Christmas, he is going to be prepared. Also the 350 is now quicker than last year and a faster bike on the track. I hope we see some big battles between those two and the rest of course, because it only makes the sport look better.
**MXIllustrated:** How busy are you these days, with all the work in America and also preparing the team for the FIM World Motocross Championship? I mean it seems like your are busier than when you raced.
**EVERTS:** To be honest on the America side Roger is the main guy and myself and Pit and the other people in Europe want to be closely involved and be there in the discussions and also the future plans, which we are already making. I am super busy and I am trying to do my job better. Right now I am busy on the schedule of Jeremy and Jeffrey so they are ready. They been to Spain and now they go to Italy for riding, then come back and then back to Spain. We are trying to get it organized which days they ride and all that stuff. Also on the technical side a lot is happening in Austria. I am busy, next weekend I am off to Austria for three days for meetings and also looking ahead for the 2013 models.
**MXIllustrated:** What about working with Roger De Coster. I get the impression that he is always business, he always seems pretty serious. Can you sit down and bench race with him, talk about the old days when he raced?
**EVERTS:** We spent some time together in my last trip. He is very concerned about the people in the team, not just the riders. Communication is very important and Roger tried to do that a lot on his road to success. It's very interesting watching him work and I can learn a lot from him. I think we are on the same page with most of the stuff. He has a lot of experience. Sure, you can talk about the old days and he has some great stories. Of course some of the great stories are from when he was racing Joel Robert. Joel Robert the big hero in Belgium, a superstar and they went through a lot. It's interesting to talk about it. Roger sometimes comes out of the corner with some funny jokes, he isn't always serious, but when you don't expect it he comes out with a big joke.
**MXIllustrated:** Do you still respect him as the rider who won five World titles; is it hard to forget he's a legend in our sport?
**EVERTS:** I still look up to him, also like riders like Eric Geboers and some others. I mean Roger went to the states and is very well respect, maybe even more so for his team manager roll than as a five times World Motocross Champion. Everyone in the paddock looks up to him and we are lucky to have him on our side.
**MXIllustrated:** Monster Energy is coming to sponsor the FIM World Motocross Championships. Obviously your main sponsor is Red Bull. What is your opinion of the move from Monster to come into the Grand Prix's?
**EVERTS:** My feeling is you need good competition to become even better. In a way it's good to have competition for Red Bull, because it will only push them to go even harder and the sport will benefit from this. I see it as a positive thing. Red Bull is very strong in Europe and Monster are strong in America and now Monster are trying to gain a bigger margin in Europe, they are also very motorsport motivated and I like that. I am not anti Monster.
**MXIllustrated:** Last and most important question, how is your daughter doing? How is it to be a father for the second time?
**EVERTS:** She is doing well. I like it very much, she still isn't 100% with her stomach, but when she looks at me with those beautiful eyes I just melt. Things are easier, because with the first one you are more concerned, and now you know what the problem is. The second one is a girl and that is nice, but I need to get used to the girly dresses. «

# LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

## STEFAN EVERTS INTERVIEW

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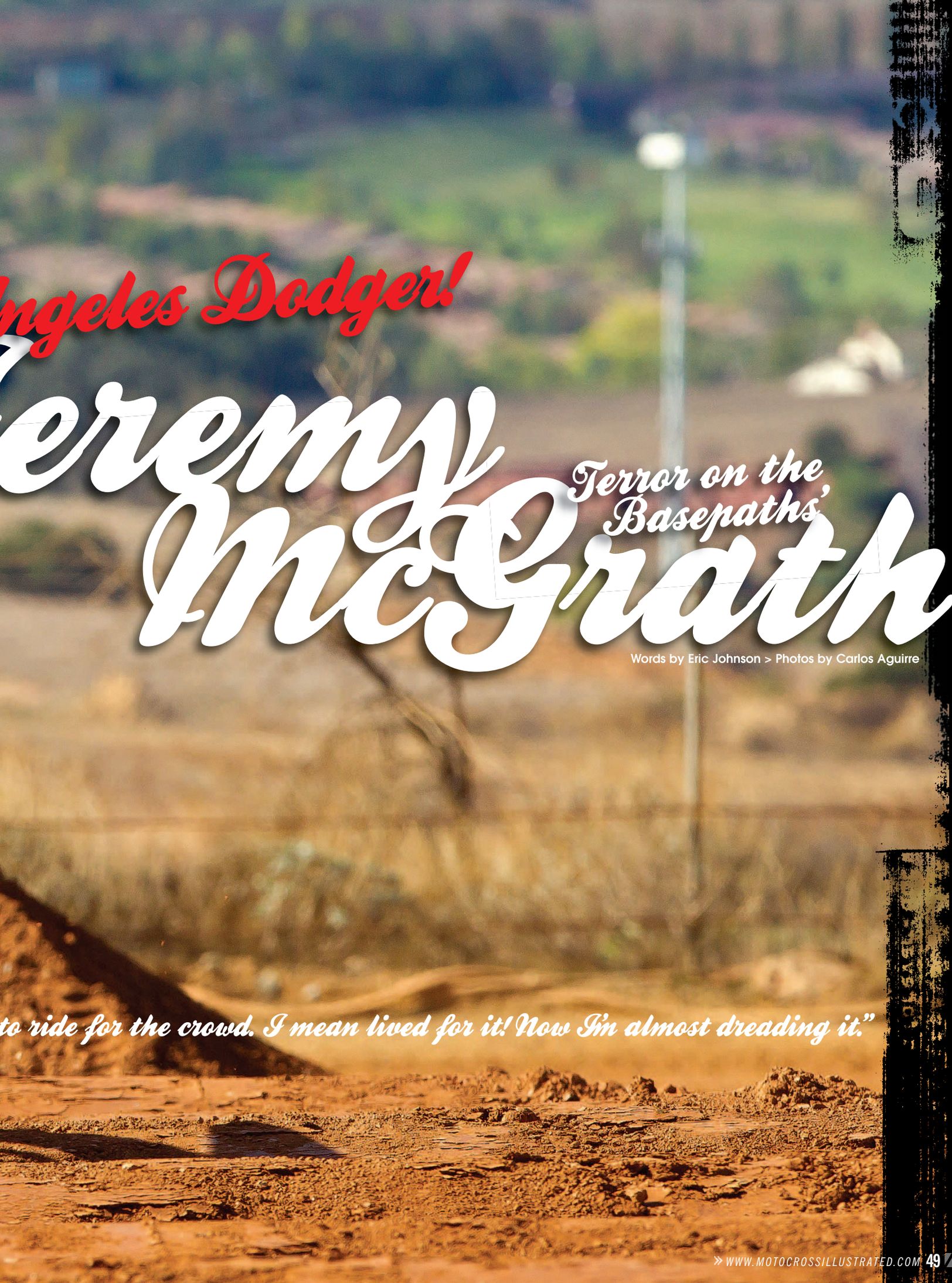
*"Man, am I nervous. I used to live*



# ngeles Dodger!

# eremy McGrath

## Terror on the Basepaths

Words by Eric Johnson > Photos by Carlos Aguirre

*to ride for the crowd. I mean lived for it! Now I'm almost dreading it."*

# Jeremy McGrath

# FANS

It was a bright, sun kissed morning in downtown Los Angeles, California and Jeremy McGrath was walking the Supercross track that had been built upon the baseball field of the Los Angeles Dodgers Major League Baseball team. The third round of the 2011 Monster Energy Supercross Series, this would be the first time in history of stadium motocross that a race would be held in the third oldest stadium in U.S. baseball. The evening was poised to be a huge moment for the sport as the baseball stadium – completed in 1962 – is one of the most storied and historic in all of American sports. To help kick of the big evening, FELD Motor Sports had invited the seven-time, 72-race-winning "legend in our time" to perform a ceremonial "First Whip" during opening ceremonies. For those of you who may not be familiar with American baseball, the "First Pitch" is a term used to describe the act of a baseball club inviting out a movie star, rock star, politician – you name it – and have them walk out to the pitcher's mound and throw the ball to the catcher, thus beginning the start of the game. Having said that, you can probably figure out how FELD' came up with the clever "First Whip" scheme.

To that end, McGrath, who still rides prolifically, was still pretty damn nervous about performing his Whip. "Man, I hope I don't struggle through these whoops tonight," he said aloud.

Well, when the time came – at 7 P.M. – the greatest Supercross rider of all-time – the Babe Ruth of our sport (Ruth, who played baseball primarily for the New York Yankees from 1914 through 1935, is considered the greatest American athlete of all-time and was responsible for the explosion in baseball popularity in this nation during the Roaring 20s) joined Ryan Villopoto, Chad Reed, Trey Canard, Ryan Dungey and James Stewart in a hot lap before performing his First Whip. Smooth, graceful and confident, McGrath raced around the track, throwing out his signature Nac-Nac move and a number of whips, all to the adoring L.A. crowd which roared its appreciation at MC's ceremonial lap.

The following is an interview with "Showtime" McGrath about his big day – and big night at Chavez Ravine.

*Smooth, graceful and confident, McGrath raced around the track, throwing out his signature Nac-Nac move and a number of whips, all to the adoring L.A. crowd...*

**Jeremy McGrath. Saturday, January 22, 2011. 3:15 P.M.**
**Dodger Stadium. Los Angeles, California. USA**

**Jeremy, this morning, during the track walk, you mentioned to me that you were really sore. What were you sore from?**
Yeah, I'm still super-sore from doing a photo shoot out at my ranch on Monday and Tuesday. I was riding with (Antonio) Cairoli and (Kevin) Windham and the jumps were huge. I think we rode for seven hours. We pretty much rode all day long. It was pretty gnarly. I woke up the next day and I was like,"Oh, man, I can't move!"
**Had it been a while since you had been on the bike?**
No, I've been on the bike. That was the funny thing. I think all the big jumps and the duration of my riding – I mean I rode from sunup to sundown – and the accumulation of being old and riding for so long made me super-sore.
**Since you were a kid, you've been known as a great jumper. Does that still come naturally to you?**
Yeah, yeah it does. I mean I was totally fine jumping. The funny thing is that I did it all RIGHT and I'm still sore. It's not like I was casing everything. It's one of those things, dude. I don't know (laughter).
**How were Cairoli's jumping skills?**
Cairoli was good – and he speaks great English. He was good. He was just scared of the metal ramps (i.e. Freestyle Motocross ramps). He ate it on a couple of jumps. He had fun, but he cased one jump pretty good and that scared him a little bit.
**How about Windham? I forget, how close in age are you two guys?**
He's 35, I think.
**How old are you?**
I'm 39. He's a couple years younger than me.
**Do you and KW get along alright?**
Yeah, we get along great. Kevin and I have always had a lot of respect for each other. Yeah, it's always been really good.
**Alright, let's go back to earlier this morning. You said, "Yeah, they're (FELD) going to have me do the opening lap here tonight." How did that come about?**
Well, it's funny. They asked me to do a parade lap before the race. Actually, what it was, you know how they do a ceremonially first pitch in baseball?
**Yeah.**
Well, they want me to do the ceremoniously First Whip here in Dodger Stadium. I was, like, super-pumped to do it, but at the same time I was freaking out because I was so nervous. I haven't done a parade lap in a while, you know? So that's why I went out in the first "A" practice. I was like, 'I'll do it, I'll do the parade lap, but you guys have to let me practice so I can get used to the track.
**You looked good in practice. Did you feel good out there? You were riding with the best dudes in the world…**
I felt pretty good. I was definitely hesitant in the woops. The second set of woops were pretty big and I didn't want to crash myself out of the first practice. I'll be fine for later, yeah.
**Once again, going back to this morning, you mentioned to me that you "used to live for riding before the crowd," but that you felt a bit differently here at Dodger Stadium…**
Yeah, I used to live for riding in front of all the people. I mean I would live for that – I would die for that. I couldn't wait to get out there. The funny thing is that I feel so awkward right now because I feel like I might be in the way of some of the racing or whatever. It's a strange, strange feeling because I used to die for that feeling, but now I'm just super-nervous and awkward feeling. Thank God I got to ride with those guys in practice because I'd have a hard time out there by myself because I'd be so nervous. It's weird how that has changed.
**Will you be nervous before you do your "Opening Whip" lap tonight?**
Oh, I'm sure, but at least I have the track down.
**What do you think of this stadium? What do you think of the sport coming to this glamorous and old baseball venue?**
I think it's cool. I think baseball stadiums are a little tough for the track – it's hard to get a good track. But being right here, right here in L.A. is super-rad. I think it's sick.
**Have you ever been here?**
No, even as a kid, I never watched a baseball game or nothing.
**Are you a baseball fan?**
Yeah, I like baseball. It's alright. I mean I wouldn't drive all the way to L.A. to watch a game. I used to watch the Dodgers. I'd watch Tommy Lasorda (legendary Dodger team manager) throw fits on TV and stuff. It was kind of funny.
**You think you'll feel that "rush" of being in front of the crowd again tonight?**
Yeah. I'm pumped. Yeah, I feel the rush again. The rush won't be as big as if I was lining on the gate or something.
**A mutual friend of ours mentioned that you might feel a little bit awkward about all this. Sort of like maybe your feel your time has come and gone and you don't want to get in the way. Are you feeling that way?**
Yeah, I feel a little awkward. I just don't want the other guys thinking, "Oh, what's he doing out there?" If I had a hard time riding or I still didn't ride as much as I do, I would never even consider what I'm doing. I figure I can still do it and feel legitimate about it.
**In the 1920s, Babe Ruth was single handedly credited for the popularity explosion in Baseball in America. His charisma, exploits and larger than life personality brought baseball to the masses. I don't want to embarrass you, but that's kind of how I feel about what you did for Supercross. You came out of nowhere to dominate the sport as a rookie in 1993. Along with that, you brought a certain style and panache that both hardcore fans and fans that were new to the sport could identify with and relate to. Then there were the seven championships and 72 wins and all the records that helped led to a spike in the popularity of Supercross. What's your take on all this?**
Well, as far as the records, they are pretty far away. For all the active guys, they're pretty far away. They're pretty far away at this point. When you see it on paper, you're like, "Holly crap. How did that even happen?" The championships are lined up with all the wins and all that stuff. It'll be broken someday. Let's hope it's not before dead. Exactly. Hopefully we're gone at that point.

Well, it took Hank Aaron 39 years to break Babe Ruth's all-time home run mark. If we follow that match, we should make it.
That would cool, tool. Ha!

**Jeremy McGrath. Saturday, January 22, 2011. 9:06 P.M. Dodger Stadium. Monster Energy Corporate Suite. Angeles, California. USA**

**MC, you looked great out there on your "First Whip" lap. How did it all feel?**
Once I went down there through the tunnel and onto the track, it all went to reset. Before that I was nervous as hell. Once I started riding, I really enjoyed it and it was a huge rush. It was great. «

## Jeremy McGrath

*Yeah. I'm pumped. Yeah, I feel the rush again. The rush won't be as big as if I was lining on the gate or something.*

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## SX LITES START

There is no doubt that Josh Hansen is the man in the West Coast AMA Supercross series. The Monster Energy rider has shown great skills and courage to be the star of the show. The young 16 year old on his left shoulder is German sensation Ken Roczen, and he is looking very likely to start stealing some of Hansen's glory

PHOTO COURTESY OF MONSTER ENERGY

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## RYAN VILLOPOTO

**Monster Energy Kawasaki rider Ryan Villopoto is showing the form that took him to 125cc success and an amazing MXoN performance. If anyone can beat James Stewart in this years AMA Supercross Championship then it's the redheaded Villopoto**

PHOTO COURTESY OF MONSTER ENERGY

GALLERY

Nº03.6

## MX1 START

It's not that old school, but in 2005 we sure had some talent running in the Belgian Championships. Here are four World Champions and the man who should have been a World champion. Five times World Champion, Joel Smets (3), 10 times World Champion, Stefan Everts (72), 2004 MX2 Champion, Ben Townley (30), two times World Champion, Steve Ramon (11) and mister unlucky, Josh Coppins (5) breaking out of the start and bursting into action

PHOTO BY GEOFF MEYER

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Coppins

# ot yet ready to slow down

Words and photos by Andy McGechan

**He's had 15 years of hard graft on the motocross Grand Prix circuit, but New Zealand's Josh Coppins is still not quite ready for the slippers, pipe and rocking chair on the front porch of his sun-baked Motueka home.**

Photo: Ian Roxburgh

# Coppins not yet ready to slow down

Nestled in the shadow of nearby snow-capped Mount Arthur, at the northernmost tip of the picturesque Southern Alps, the setting for Coppins' home could have been lifted straight from a Lord of the Rings film set.

It's certainly tranquil ... and a long way removed from the high-octane world of motocross GP. In fact, it would be very easy for Josh Coppins to forget his former life as a factory star, except for a couple of things – he is still in high demand as a racer in the South Pacific region, he still has plenty to offer in terms of coaching and his fabulous home overlooks the Rat Track Supercross facility, the Nelson Motorcycle Club's purpose-build outdoor supercross track that hosts a round of the New Zealand championships each season.

Of course, the Coppins home itself contains constant reminders of its owner's occupation and passion, with a private supercross track, motocross track, gymnasium and very well-appointed workshop right there on the property.

"The GP scene is definitely out of my system now. I'm not thinking about what I did or where I've come from," said Coppins when asked to reflect upon his decision to 'retire' to this geographically-remote part of the world.

"Sure, I will watch the GP season with interest from here in New Zealand but I'm not looking back with any regrets.

"I'm still in touch with all my friends in Europe ... they are what I miss most since coming home, but Skype's a great thing.

"I've been extremely busy since coming home. I have a 50-acre farm with between 11 and 30 cows (depending on the season), 20 sheep ... just to be lawnmowers on the supercross track ... two pigs, dogs and chickens ... for the eggs. It's a perfect place to bring up (two-year-old daughter) Myla. It's hard to leave.

"Our second child is due in January too, so life's about as busy as it can get. Lisa (Josh's partner, Lisa Church, the British-born former manager of the Molson Kawasaki GP Racing Team) seems pretty comfortable too. Sometimes I think I should probably stay at home more ... to be a good dad," says Coppins, the fatherly side of him coming to the fore.

"I've got a few business interests that keep me busy too. I have a few commercial properties that I rent out. But everything takes time. When I came back to New Zealand I found I was a citizen but not an official resident, so I had to sort that out and get an email address, bank account, mail box ...

"As well as that I have been spending a bit of time helping Motorcycling New Zealand with advice on various things.

"I do miss my friends from Europe and the food in Italy, but my life is here now and I just need to concentrate on doing my job for Yamaha. For the next 12 months my life is all mapped out in that regards.

"There have been a few changes in New Zealand since I've been away. Life is more expensive here than it used to be and the weather is more extreme ... hotter and colder too. On the positive side, the motocross scene had gotten more professional, although the riders are getting better, they are still not really good enough (to take on the Europeans or the GPs)."

Coppins has a few things planned before he finally calls it quits and he prefers to describe his current situation as merely taking a detour before retirement, or perhaps even blasting off on the new phase of his racing career before finally settling down as a coach and/or mentor for New Zealand's future GP stars.

But racing in the Southern Hemisphere is very much in his plans for the short term.

The former Grand Prix motocross star collected his new 2011-model Yamaha YZ450F in November and immediately went out to have his first training session on board the bike at his Motueka home track.

The 33-year-old factory racer, who retired from the World Motocross Championship scene at the end of this season and he has no regrets.

He has had a 15-year campaign in Europe dotted with so many highlights and race wins, he has made so many dear and long-lasting friends and still has a huge following of fans and supporters in that part of the world.

Coppins will now race the New Zealand Supercross Championships and New Zealand Motocross Championships, racing a Yamaha YZ450F for the MXDK Rockstar Yamaha Team (owned and managed by former GP racer and two-time 500cc world No.2 Darryll King) and then he heads across the Tasman Sea to race a full season in Australia.

In Australia he will race for CDR Rockstar Yamaha team, owned and managed by another former racer familiar to the GP crowd, multi-time former Australian champion and motocross of Nations team rider Craig Dack.

Coppins says it's great to be home ... remember that this is the corner of the world where he honed his craft before heading off to Europe fulltime in 1995.

"I had had a few weeks off and not ridden since (leading Team New Zealand to eighth overall at) the Motocross of Nations in Denver, Colorado, in September," said Coppins.

"I've had enough time off and now it's time to go racing again. I was really comfortable on the new Yamaha bike the first time out," said Coppins, who came within an ace of winning the world MX1 title for Yamaha when he raced for the factory in 2007.

"It just felt great to be back on a bike and, although it's not a factory bike, the production motorcycles these days are so advanced, it may as well be. I have always been impressed with the professionalism of Yamaha and what they can produce.

"I just need to do a little fine tuning now, then get my head down and get the job done racing in Australia and New Zealand.

"Because I've been racing GPs for so long, I need to modify my approach. I don't need to hold anything in reserve for 40-minute races ... it's all about sprinting now, with races in New Zealand and Australia only about half that duration.

Coppins will join Hamilton's Hayden Clark, national 125cc champion Damien King, of Cambridge, and national under-21 champion Ethan Martens, of Waitakere, in the MXDK Rockstar Yamaha enclosure at key New Zealand events this summer.

In Australia Coppins will be teamed with 27-year-old Jay Marmont.

In 2010, Marmont won his third consecutive Australian Motocross Championship and now his greatest battle is about to begin, trying to tame his illustrious team-mate.

"The Australian motocross scene is now world class and a team like CDR Rockstar Yamaha is every bit as professional as what you would see in the pit paddocks of Europe or in the USA," said Coppins

Team owner Craig Dack is also proud to have the signature of the world ranked Coppins for 2011 and thinks he will bring more than results to his team.

"Josh is a world class rider who has won GPs around the world and been at the pointy end of world motocross championships for over a decade. With over 200 GP starts, the knowledge he will bring to the team as well as the experience he has can't be bought and he will be a great addition to CDR Rockstar Yamaha," Dack said.

The Australian motocross season kicks off in late March and one thing is for certain, Josh Coppins intends to be on top of the podium when the six-round series winds up again in July.

# Coppins not yet ready to slow down

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## ROGER DE COSTER

Red Bull KTM factory and Team USA team manager Roger De Coster will always be "The Man". Here is a cool image of the 5-times World 500cc Champion cruising to victory in the prime of his career. Anyone in the 50's or 40's should remember his amazing style and grace

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# GALLERY

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## Nº039

### VILLOPOTO V STEWART

The big battle of the 2011 AMA Supercross series is the fight between former Lites Champion Ryan Villopoto and former Supercross Champion James Stewart. Until now it's two wins for Villopoto and three wins for Stewart

PHOTO BY CARLOS AGUIRRE

# GALLERY

ILLUSTRATED

03.10

## ZACH OSBOURNE

American racer Zach Osborne isn't far off the pace of the leading FIM World MX2 Championship front runners. He's lost weight and is hungry to be in the mix in 2011. Don't be surprised to see him win a Grand Prix of two in the coming six months

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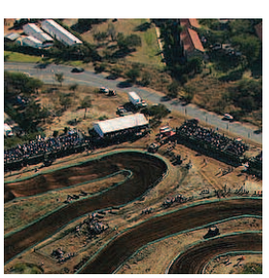

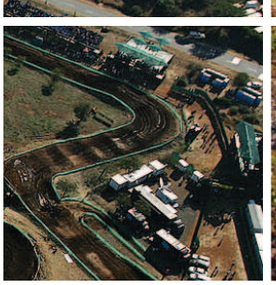

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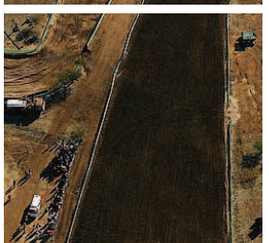

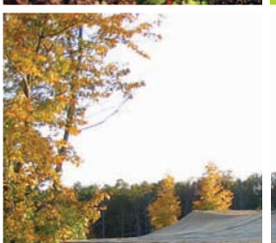

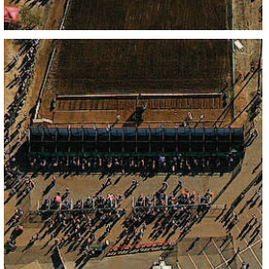

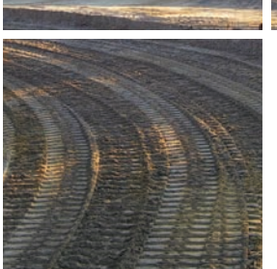

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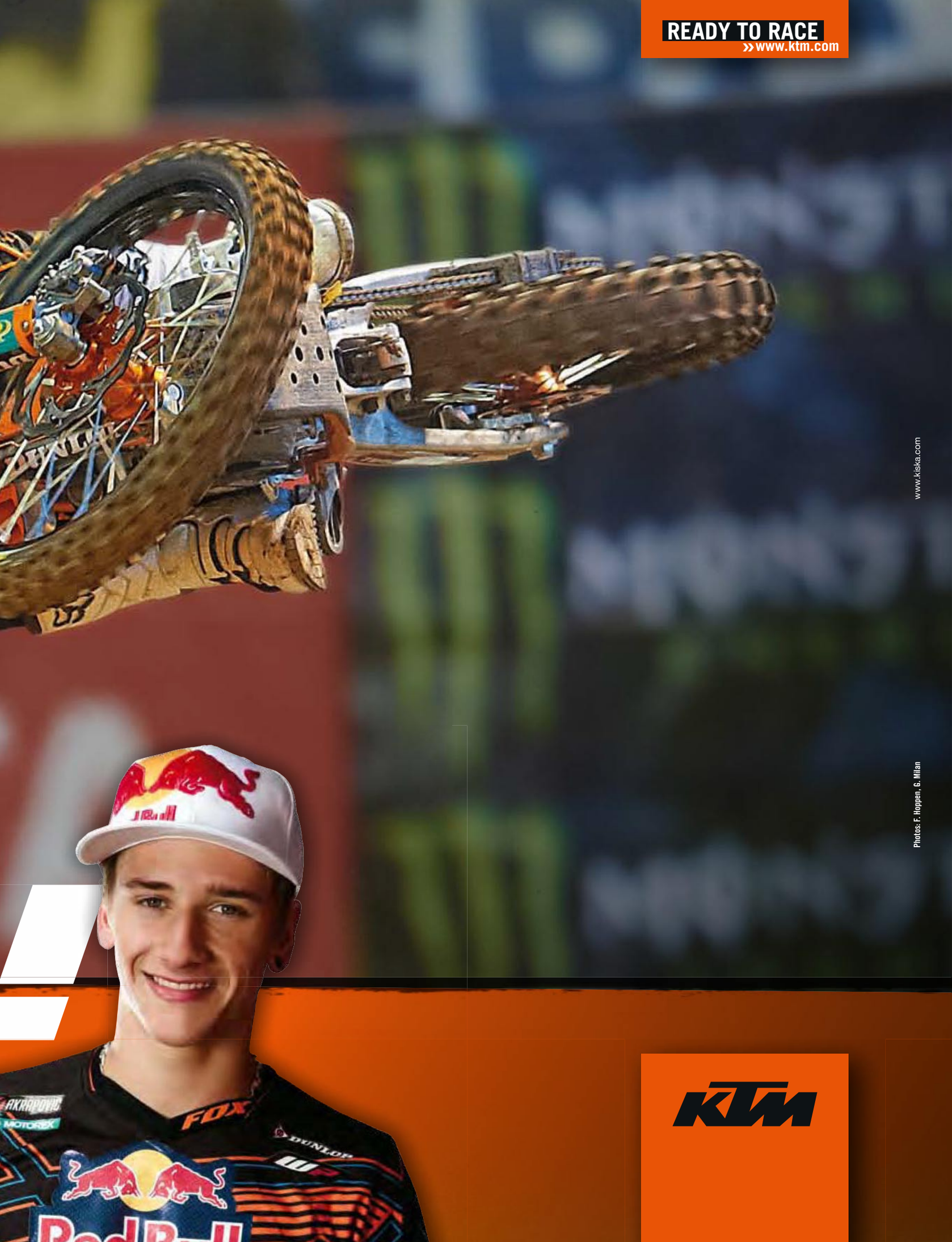

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# MONGOLIAN MOTOCROSS

# TRAVELLING MAN

Words by Dimitris Keramidas
Photos: Giorgos Legakis

**Far away, in the epic lands of Mongolia, home of tough warriors and Jenkins Han, a place that seems forgotten by God, there are motocross races, which shows that competitiveness and the need to go beyond your limits is an undeniable part of human nature, and that, no matter how harsh the conditions are, there is always a way to stand out of the crowd**

# MONGOL MOTOCROS

## TRAVELLING MAN

Being a student (not a good one, I should admit) the only class I was mostly interested in was no other than Geography. My obsession to learn with great passion everything I could for other countries was probably fuelled by my need to escape, ever since I remember myself growing up. I was always fascinated by the journey, not the destination, and I was travelling through books and world maps.

Some of the few things one could learn at that time about Mongolia, made it sound like an even more mythic destination – imagine wanting to race motocross there. Ever since I was a little child I dreamt about racing motocross and visiting places all over the world. This passion made me search for racing in some of the most exotic parts of the world, nationally or internationally. What excited me was the idea to race in the most unbelievable places of the world. My personal experience makes me say that there is no place in the world, no matter how remote that is, where there aren't motocross races, with at least one rider competing and getting good results. In April 2006, I raced a round of the United Arab Emirates Championship, in Dubai – and then learned that races also exist in Iran, Vietnam, Mongolia and so many other countries of the Asian continent. What attracted my interest the most was Mongolia, so I started looking for information to get there to race. What I discovered was that, apart from races from the national championship, there was also a big international race – and that was a good reason to get there. The race was scheduled for July 1st, so I got in contact with the local people through e-mail at the beginning of April, but got no response. So, I decided to try again, a month later, by sending a letter, which received, to my great surprise, an immediate response. They were asking me for my personal information and the reasons I wanted to race there.

When trying to compete in an international race, whatever the level of that race is, you should know how to promote yourself and convince the organizer that a competitor from Greece could be useful. So, the president of the organizing committee and I made an agreement and the countdown for the race began. When setting such a goal and looking at the map, you get an awe, which could even make you change your mind, but since you have made your decisions, you'll make it no matter how many obstacles you come across.

Time got by pretty fast and there I was sitting on the aeroplane next to my dear friend and personal photographer, Giorgos Legakis, who accepted the invitation for the trip to Mongolia at once, considering he has also got a certain degree of insanity, like me. The flight from Athens to Moscow lasted four hours, and then there was another one from Moscow to Ulaanbaatar (the capital of Mongolia), lasting five hours.

The first shock arrived when we saw the aeroplane that was going to carry us there. It was so old that I could bet Breznief had travelled with that too. By the moment we got in, we could do nothing more than pray to God. Next shock (one of many to follow) came when we landed at Ulaanbaatar and we saw the landscape. There were huge mountains with no sight of green, which seems like landing on Mars. The shock of arriving there was intensified by landing on such a narrow runway that was just covered by dirt, not tarmac. Images of human aid came to my mind, with aeroplanes landing in the middle of nowhere to offer help to poor people.

After getting through the necessary controls, who are we, where are we heading, why had we come, we reached the baggage claim room, where we got one of the biggest shocks, realizing that none of our luggage had arrived. No racing gear, no cameras, no personal things. We declared the loss, phoned to Moscow and finally got the reply that our luggage would arrive two days later, when the next plane would reach the city. It was Wednesday and we had to wait till Friday.

Surprises wouldn't stop coming at this trip, and the shock that followed that incident, with the taxi driver who got us downtown, made me realise that things had gotten really hard. The guy wanted us to pay him 30euros for a trip of 15 kilometres, which is almost the monthly wage of an average worker there. We reached the city centre through a chaos in the streets, with millions of cars each one of them following its own traffic rules. You could see drivers shouting to with each other while moving, a bus stopping at a crossroad, and people almost fighting in the middle of the streets. Most of the citizens stared us with hostility, probably because the country was forbidden to western people for many decades. What you would get from them was a standard kindness, although I doubt any of them could hesitate killing you for a few bucks. All that may sound extreme, but it's a reality in that country.

The organizer was supposed to book us a room at a hotel and we were supposed to find him to tell us where that hotel is, but unfortunately he would not respond to none of our calls. The first feeling you get in such circumstances is despair. You are that far away from your country, having list all of your luggage and could not get in touch with none of the people that were supposed to wait for you, wondering on the streets of a fierce and hostile city. The only encouraging thing was that next to the House of Parliament was a huge poster of the race with all the flags of the countries that took part. It was reassuring seeing the Greek flag.

After hours of searching, we found a decent hotel (compared to what we've seen), but what about food? All products sold in local stores had expired, and water was not drinkable. Our panic grew bigger when we entered a super-market only to discover that everything was so dirty. There was meat thrown on filthy tables and products that expired at 2004 were sold! The atmosphere was so bad that you could even get a food poisoning simply by smelling those things!

We were lucky enough to find an expensive restaurant that was close to our hotel, but had an armed guard outside the main entrance. Even the waiters were really happy to see us.

We later learned that all shops and restaurants that had guards outside, were good ones and that food, water and refreshments sold there were safe. We even found some bottled water that was had not expired, but our stomachs could not stop complaining.

So far, we had secured a night's sleep and food. What we hadn't managed to do was to find someone from the organizing committee. We spent two days of doing almost nothing until Friday, the day we were supposed to get our lost luggage from the airport. Back to the trip to death with a taxi driver driving like mad in the busy streets and in the end asking us to pay him a fortune – if you dare, complain…

All misfortune was soon to be forgotten when we saw our luggage. But our joy would not last for long. When we got our luggage, we realised most of the things inside them were stolen. Our sadness was replaced by despair. I wanted to shout: "That's enough". The only thing that they left in my bag was a pair of racing pants, a jersey, a pair of boots and a helmet. The photographer was left with only one camera. The rest of our gear was gone!

We got back to the hotel and changed our plans as to how we were going to find the Motorcycle Federation, which was housed in the Ministry of Sports (that made things a bit easier). At least I hoped so, because when we found the Ministry, the door's man insisted that there was no such thing there. I was showing him the invitation, but he could not change his mind. Our shouts were heard and another guy, who looked rather annoyed, approached us and asked what was going on. I told him that I'm looking for the Motorcycle Federation and he immediately asked me if I was coming from Greece. I answered "Yes" and he became rather friendly and told us they were waiting for us…

He made a call from his mobile phone and told us that the president of the Federation would soon arrive to get us to the track. Indeed, a guy that looked like an actor from one of Bruce Lee's films arrived. He was friendly and seemed to be happy with us being there.

Arriving at the track gave us another shock. There were huge jumps, even bigger than triple ones, of about twenty meters. The take-offs and landings were full of stones, broken glass, wood and empty bottles. I was rather afraid, not that much due to the level of the track's difficulty, but mostly by the thought that any possible accident, like breaking a hand, would automatically mean the end of my life! I hadn't made such a long trip not to race, so I stayed away from any bad thoughts and asked for the motorcycle that I was going to ride. Once more at this journey, I could not say I was happy seeing the motorcycle. It was a Honda CRF 250, 2004 model, which was in a really bad condition. I did not bother. I fired the engine to put some laps and the engine sounded like it was going to break down. I couldn't even get through the practise laps with that thing!

The president understood that there was a problem, so he informed me that the Russian guys that were supposed to arrive the following day could bring me an RMZ, 2007 model, but wanted me to pay another 100 dollars. I immediately agreed and everything was fine. Apart from the international race that included riders from Russia, China, South Korea and a mad guy from Greece, there was also a round for the Mongolian championship.

I stayed on the track till late, talking to a really nice guy who organised a motorcycle tour inside the country and had a son that competed in Mini class. I learned a lot from that guy about the country's racing history and the conditions there.

Motocross championship as well as Ice Racing championship had begun at 1955 and up until 1990, before the fall of communism; there were only CZ and Jawa motorcycles. Riders were paid by the government, while from 1992 on Japanese motorcycles started racing. The current motocross championship consisted of ten races, that took place in five different tracks, two of them in the capital and another three in the countryside. At winter there was snow and ice, but training continued normally using tires with nails – although it was easier to do Ice Racing then. The new generation of riders preferred MX, while there was also a Rally championship.

The surroundings of the track included an old electricity plant, and our eager to talk interlocutor kept providing us with any kind of information about the motorcycle world of the country. With our great surprise, we heard that a tire would cost 80 euros and a motorcycle 7.000euros. How could this be possible? In a country where a month's salary is 30 euros, how could there be people that could race motocross and spend so much money? The answer is simple and unprejudiced: people who worked for the government's higher rankings at the communist era, when the country went though the capitalist economy, they created a group which pretty much resembles the mafia. They continued having control over everything and gathering amazing amounts of money. Those guys would drive Porsches and Hammer jeeps and their kids would race motocross.

That, of course, is no surprise, considering that in our days, one of the modern activated of the mafia is to sponsor races all over the world – at least in this case, illegal money has been connected with racing activities for many years. To give you a clue of the situation, the vast majority of people live under the levels of humiliation, another part of the population could be considered as poor, and there are also about a thousand people who do a rather provocatively wealthy living.

Among the people I met in the track, there was an adorable person, sitting on a wheelchair – the way everybody treated him showed that they all respected him. He was Erdene Bileg, who is considered a living legend in his country and has won 40 national championships in motocross, Ice Racing and Rally racing. He is 47 years old and is sitting on a wheelchair since 1996, after a terrible crash in the Paris-Beijing Rally. The family story is continued by his 18-year old son, Khalin, who has won several championships the past few years. He was constantly smiling and I could say I haven't seen a man with such an optimistic and reassuring look. He had a certain aura that you could rarely find in a person.

Although racing is a very expensive thing, motorcycles are seen as a rather outlaw activity in local community and only if you could afford a car people respect you. The average number of motorcycles compared to cars is only three for every thousand. There are mostly big motorcycles, like R1s and ZX-Rs from the last decade. All riders wear helmets, apart from police officers who proudly enjoy riding their motorcycles.

MONGOL

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All over the capital there are only two motorcycle stores, one selling big motorcycles and the other selling Chinese mopeds that are bought by people in the countryside. Most people buying big motorcycles belong to the wealthy ones and also have an expensive car. Usually, even race riders don't have motorcycles for street use, but Subaru Imprezas and any kind of expensive sports cars. And most of them are kinds aged 17 and 18.

Time went by and I asked a guy to call for a taxi to get us to the hotel. He immediately offered to drive us there by himself. We simple made the mistake to accept the offer. The guy was speeding like crazy, he did not stop at any of the red traffic lights and we definitely survived some fatal crashes with some poor pedestrians who are really lucky to be alive. It was a horrifying experience in that crazy country.

Although we went through all these surprises, we got back to the hotel having a sense of joy. Our trouble seemed to reach the end and things were finally in the right order. I was so happy I got the photographer to the same restaurant. I tipped the waitresses in advance and they were eager to make us feel comfortable.

## GATHERING STRENGTH BEFORE THE BATTLE

We woke up late Saturday morning. Although we had been through so much, we were in a good mood. We had to be at the track by twelve o' clock to catch the first timed practise session. An hour later the main programme begun. It consisted of the international race and the round for the national championship. That meant the Mongolian riders would be the first to do the timed practise session and then the rest of us would join them for the international race. Our trip to the track was once more done with a taxi whose driver should be using a magic button that changed its meter, charging us a fortune. Besides, that was the best we could get!

It was the day the Russian guys would arrive, so the first thing to do was visit them to check if my motorcycle was ok. It was indeed in a good condition, but could definitely use a new set of sprockets and a new chain. Alexei, the owner, told me I could ride it to see if it's ok. Needless to say that everywhere I went I was followed by a bunch of people that would give me a curious look, like I came from another planet, or like I was Stefan Everts. When the Mongolian riders hit the track, there was only one rider going fast, and was far better than any of the rest. He was the young champion Bileg. He was not extremely fast, but considering the average Mongolian level, he was better than any other.

The time for the international practise session arrived and I was ready for my first racing experience in Mongolia. Two or three laps later I went through the starting line and Bileg went after me. His father had told him so. He was so aggressive and fierce that made my riding for most of the remaining part really out of control. Although he had almost the same speed as I did, he could not hold it for more than a few laps. Russian rider Alexei was almost at the same level, while the rest of the riders were really slow, with Chinese guys losing a minute per lap.

When the timed practise ended there was something like a preliminary race for Sunday's final – it was like we were 50 riders and there was not enough space for everybody on the starting gate, but we were only 15 rides. The gate dropped, I got the holeshot and started shouting at myself through my helmet, blaming myself for this ridiculous and extremely dangerous situation I had put myself through. Hitting a rock a few moments later made me curse myself for even thinking to travel so far away thinking that it could be easy to win a race over there. Fortunately I didn't crash at that point. But I finally could not avoid crashing. It was lap number three and while I was lapping some slower riders, who were mere obstacles on track, I hit one of them and crashed. The bike was ok, but the engine refused to start. It took me two minutes to make it start. By that time I was third, behind Bileg and Tyletski, who finished first and second.

Another thing that caught my attention was the fact that there were many prizes and cups. Although it was a preliminary race they gave cups to the first three finishers and to the guy that got the holeshot – so everybody was happy at the end of the day.

I returned to the paddocks full of relief and sat in a chair. The president of the Motorcycle Federation arrives to ask me about my opinion of the whole event. I sure told him that everything was great (I couldn't dare to tell him it was chaos). He then offered to drive us to the hotel – he should be Mongolia's most careful driver. He drove his expensive car really carefully and would not bother by other drivers challenging him to speed up. The truth is that nobody from the motorcycle community liked the president, and that was due to the fact that he was simply appointed by the government to get this position and had nothing to do with motorcycles.

We rested for a bit and since everything was going good (I had a sense wellness after spending four days in Mongolia) I suggested Giorgos, the photographer, to get a glimpse of the night life of Ulaanbaatar. Even though most of them are poor, people were out on the streets and women were beautiful and well-dressed. On both sides of the roads they had billiards and played some weird games with betting that attracted a lot of attention!

Once more my hero character woke up and instead of passing by; I sat by the players and watched them playing those games. They soon saw my western face and begged me to join them, so as to rob me of all my money. I may love taking risks, but I sure hate gambling, so I just kept on watching them playing. This great day ended with some good food in the same restaurant I told you, with waitresses being anxious to serve us once more.

Another surprise waited us during our dinner. Without being invited to do so, the Head of Ulaanbaatar Bank (at least that was the job description written on his business card), along with his guards, joined us on our dinner table. He started showing off his wealth, insisting on paying our bill – judging by his attitude to the waitresses that was common policy every time he came across westerners. After all those crazy things I came across that day, I went back to the hotel to get some rest.

There is a Greek proverb saying that "a good day starts from the early morning", and was we were going to come across that Sunday started with our encounter with the taxi driver, who charged us 40euros from the hotel to the track, a distance of only 7 kilometres. Of course I refused to pay him. While the taxi driver was shouting I made the mistake to hold my wallet open, making it possible for my euros and dollars to be seen. Finally I paid him the money he wanted.

Back to the track, I put my racing gear on and got ready for the morning warm-up laps. The rider's presentation followed and I was constantly followed by a cameraman from the Mongolian television, wherever I went, whatever I did (I saw some footage from the race and my deeds on the evening news). After the presentation everything was ready for Heat1, so I gave my wallet and all my paper to the photographer. I wore my helmet and headed to the track for the race. I got the holeshot pretty easily and was leading the race. I managed to gain some precious seconds over my rivals at round one, but my joy would not last for long. At lap number three my chain was cut and I had to watch the rest of the race from the spectator's point of view.

The photographer wanted to make sure I was safe, and told me we could take our revenge at Heat2. He headed back to the track to get some panoramic pictures. The distance was not more than 200 metres from where most of the spectators were. Unfortunately, he was attacked by some people holding knives and was robbed of all of his belongings. The money were gone, as well as our paper. Fortunately they did not hit him, because he could not even think about defending himself. We had lost everything in a hostile and crazy country. Having to deal with these circumstances so far away from home make you feel sad at first and then despaired.

The motocross race was over and a more difficult kind of race had just begun. At first, the president of the Motorcycle Federation, and even people from the crowd, showed great interest in helping us, while some of the spectators had witnessed the incident and said that they knew who the robbers were. They had even seen them handing the money to the taxi driver who brought us to the track that morning. We later found out that taxi drivers are members of an organised crime that look for tourists with enough money and then create a plan on how to steal their money.

Our initial hopefulness created by the reassuring statements that at least our passports and the rest of our travel paperwork were going to be found, was again covered by despair. The police would not arrive and no-one else seemed to care about our trouble. We were sitting with the photographer in a corner, waiting for the race to end, so that anyone could give us a lift to the city. Finally the president took us to the police, where we came across another paradox. Although we were initially told that people had seen the robbers, they later denied knowing anything about them and started showing us photos of suspects of the crime, asking us to identify them. That was a really impossible job for us to do, considering that all Asian people looked the same to us.

Getting back to the hotel meant we had to get through another epic battle. It was 11:00 at night in Greece on a Sunday night and obviously was impossible to contact any Greek public service. Unfortunately Mongolia does not have a Greek embassy and the closest one was in Beijing, three hours away by plane.

We managed to make a phone call in the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where they provided us with the phone number of the embassy in Beijing. When I phoned there, the only person present (on a Sunday night) told us that in order to get passports we had to get there. That was obviously impossible, since we had no money for tickets and no paper to get out of the country. I tried to amuse myself by saying we were lucky to be stuck in such an exotic paradise like Mongolia, but the situation was tough and all our efforts were fruitless. I spoke with friends in Greece, but they could not give us a solution.

Monday morning seemed more like the end of the world for us. We made another phone call to Beijing embassy, where finally we started approaching a possible solution. Thanks to the European Union and international laws between countries, if a citizen of a European country needs a passport to get out of any country of the world, he could get to any other embassy of another European country. Fortunately Mongolia had a German embassy.

People at the German embassy were first hesitating to help us, but finally were of great help. In three hours I had a German passport, valid for a whole month, so I could get out of the country. It was common practise for people at the embassy, considering that lots of tourists get robbed of their paper in Mongolia!

I even got some money through transfer from Greece, so I had any reason to feel happy. At least I thought so. If I wanted to leave Mongolia on Wednesday, I had to get a visa. So I went to the Tourist Organisation, which was responsible for handing visas, where I came across lots of sad westerners who waited to get back their stolen visa. It was Monday afternoon, and the woman responsible for the visas said there was no chance of making it until Wednesday. I asked for the paperwork to be returned, put a ten dollar bill inside them and returned them to her. She then said that my visa will be ready the following day.

Considering the misfortunes we had at this journey, we should have stayed locked inside our room at the hotel until the moment we would leave the country, in order to avoid making things worse. Instead I told Giorgos "Come on, why we don't go out for a while?" Instead of shouting at me, Giorgos immediately answered: "Why not, let's go out". We visited some of the most expensive places of the city, from shops to clubs. Unfortunately we had also lost the banker's business card. That could have gotten us to some glamorous places of Ulaanbaatar!

It was a long night and I couldn't stop wondering if I would finally get the visa the following day. They had even told me to get to their office late in the afternoon in order to have the visa ready, and I was afraid we might not make it before the office closes. I did get there on time, but nobody could find my new German passport, so they kept sending me from floor to floor and office to office. Another ten dollar bill later and my passport was magically found! Our last night in Mongolia was rather quiet. We woke up in the morning to get a taxi to the airport, following the normal procedure (the taxi driver charging us an enormous bill). I was so mad that when we reached the airport I had a fight with the driver just in front of some policemen that were just watching. Finally I managed to pay only 1/3 of the initial amount and run to passport control, in case I was attacked by the union of fierce taxi drivers!

Our misfortunes were not over yet. The woman on passport control informed me that it was the first time she came across such a passport and that I could not go anywhere. IT was a big lie, considering that all of the tourists that were victims of a robbery in Mongolia were given such a passport! A police officer arrives, but didn't know what to do. Ok, I see! Another ten dollar tip for each one of them would get me out of trouble. My passport was now official.

# BOSS TRAVELLING MAN

### Escaping hell

Waiting for the aeroplane to Moscow to leave we has two hours of tormenting delay. When the plane left the ground, I felt my sentence was over – like I was a convict in a Siberian prison for years. Nevertheless I was deeply afraid I would get into trouble upon arrival in Moscow, where security measures are stricter (I could even face denial to enter the country).

I did not come across any of these problems, simply because people there were accustomed to watching such passports from tourists arriving from Mongolia. To make things worse, we had to wait another 23 hours at the airport in order to catch next day's flight to Greece. Spending the night at Moscow airport I tried to take things from the beginning. How come things could have gotten so bad? Why was I so unlucky? When I stepped on Greek soil, I promised myself I would not travel anywhere else in the future!

### A missionary of MX

Travelling a lot, especially on exotic or dangerous destinations, means that you learn to evaluate many things you get in life, things that normally you pass by without paying attention to them. I've learned to take nothing for granted – and when I get back home at night I am happy for all the things I have achieved. But travelling far away in remote places, seeing how people live in the other side of the world and making new friends is great.

I have an inner phobia of flying with planes, but that can not stop me from travelling. It's good to lie down on your couch and watching "Pirates of the Caribbean" on DVD, but sometimes boredom is more dangerous in our lives than taking risks. Is there really any motocross race up in the Caribbean countries? «

# ALEX GOBERT

Words by Alex Gobert

# OUTBACK MOTOCROSS

*by Alex Gobert*

THE 2011 SEASON SEEMS TO BE THE MOST ANTICIPATED YEAR IN MOTOCROSS THAT WE'VE EXPERIENCED THIS CENTURY...

Whether it's the MX Grand Prix series, American Supercross or even the Australian domestic titles, we're all pumped to see how it all pans out come the end of the year. In Australia we particularly have a lot to look forward to with the Rockstar Energy MX Nationals, Australian Motocross Championship, as defending triple champion Jay Marmont gets set to fight for title number four in succession.

This year the MX Nationals will be contested over nine rounds spanning four states from March through July. The season will kick off on 13 March at Broadford's State Motorcycle Sports Complex in Victoria, approximately 85 kilometres north of Melbourne up the Hume Freeway. From there, the series will cover the states of New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland as the country's top contenders fight to claim Marmont's number one plate.

Marmont is the standout Motocross racer in Australia, a three-time champion since joining the powerhouse CDR Rockstar Energy Yamaha team in 2008, you don't get a more dedicated or supremely fit athlete in the sport. This season will see fan favourite Marmont shoot for a fourth straight title against an internationally acclaimed field that includes former world championship contenders Kiwi Josh Coppins – his teammate at CDR Rockstar Energy Yamaha – and Scotsman Billy Mackenzie. Coppins and Mackenzie have proven themselves as race winners in the world championship ranks, however the ever-growing Rockstar Energy MX Nationals series in Australia becomes their latest goal following decorated careers to date.

Also set to challenge Marmont is Kiwi Cody Cooper and Queensland's former champion Dan Reardon – both who have recently raced at the very top level of the sport in the United States against some of the world's best. And then there is the Aussie young guns who are quickly climbing the ladder, with Mackenzie's Kawasaki teammate Dean Ferris looking to build momentum after finishing third as a privateer rookie one year ago. Alongside Ferris you can find the likes of factory-backed Carlton Dry Honda rider Todd Waters, as well as Rockstar Motul Suzuki's Open class rookie Lawson Bopping – just to name a few.

And then there's the Lites, where Matt Moss will join the JDR Motorsports KTM team after a troublesome year on the 450 in the U.S. last year as Ryan Dungey's teammate on Rockstar Makita Suzuki. Moss will be spectacular, expected to be challenged by twin brother Jake as he's signed for Serco Yamaha, although recent arm surgery following a crash in Germany could rule him out of contention. Apart from the talented Moss twins there's Daniel McCoy at Suzuki in the Lites, plus Kirk Gibbs, Ford Dale, Kade Mosig, Cody Mackie and a host of other aggressive up and comers.

Australian Motocross has risen to become one of the biggest national level series on the planet, featuring mega dollar factory teams from manufacturers Yamaha, Honda, Suzuki, Kawasaki and KTM – all of which are taking full advantage of extensive television coverage aired nationally. There's also the world class Suzuki RACESAFE Medical Team, which is a highly trained and specialised team of medical professionals that includes Trauma Doctors, Intensive Care Paramedics, Emergency Nurses and Physiotherapists, who will provide their medical skills at each and every round of the series. For the riders this year marks the toughest challenge many of them have ever had, but for the fans the new season has revitalised our appreciation for what the top guys are capable of week in, week out.

It's this very reason why the sport is booming around the world right now, making our job as moto-journalists one of the most enjoyable and appreciated on the planet.

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# GALLERY

**JUSTIN BRAYTON**

**Justin Brayton is a former King of Bercy and a top ten AMA Supercross rider. While he might not be in the battle for a Championship or Main event win, he is consistent and has proven to be just outside the top level**

PHOTO COURTESY OF YAMAHA

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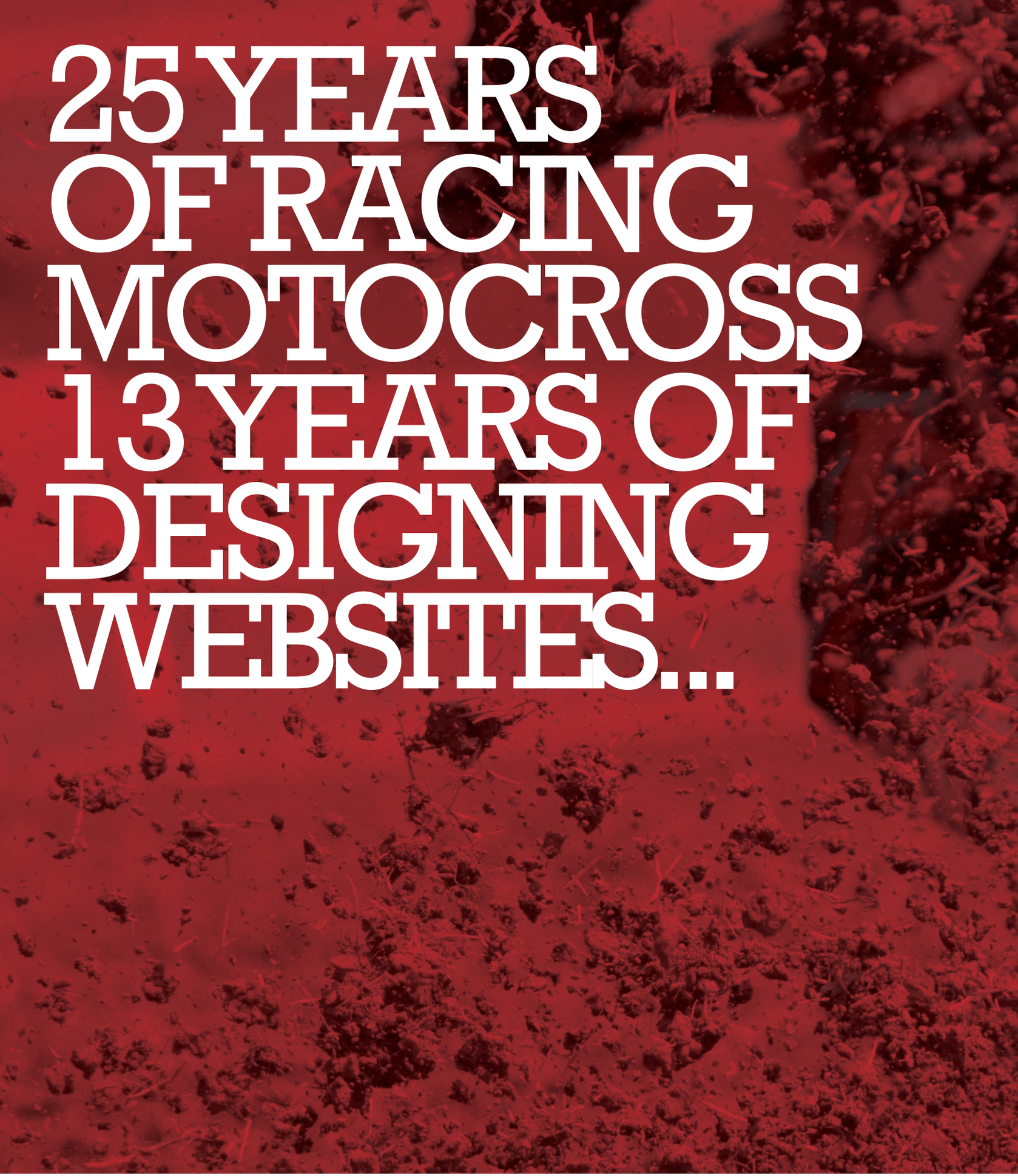
## AMA SUPERCROSS ACTION

**The AMA Supercross action is just full on. Here is a tight first corner shot as the leading AMA riders take a backward seat**

PHOTO BY CARLOS AGGUIRE

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